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KUYSYSHEV LONG-DISTANCE PHONE SERVICE CRITICIZED

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The inhabitants of Krytyashov, applying at the call office of the long-distance telephone exchange, generally cannot complain of a rude, untactful attitude on the part of the employees of the exchange. These employees answer questions promptly and politely. The waiting room is comparatively clean and there are sufficient chairs for visitors. The telephone booths are comfortable and soundproof. On the surface everything necessary appears to be available for people who wish to use the long-distance telephone service. However, many clients justly complain that it is very difficult to speak by long-distance telephone from Krytyashov. The outward courtesy in dealing with the clientele at times only conceals the deep indifference and pathetic attitude of the employees of the station toward the people they

On the day we arrived at the call station we witnessed two instances of such indifference and apathy. In the first case, a woman who had placed a call the day before came at the appointed time and waited for over an hour; then, in answer to her inquiry as to the reason for the delay, she was told that the party she called had not appeared at his call station. She had hardly left when another employee announced that the call was ready.

The second instance involved a woman who had been called 2 days earlier and, after waiting 1½ hours past the appointed hour, was told that her party had not appeared. This was her second visit, and this time she was told that due to a change in time schedules her call could not be made.

Notwithstanding the fact that Kuybyshev expanded considerably during the Stalin-Five-Year Plans and became a large industrial center (the population is close to one million), the city still has only one telephone call station. To use the long-distance telephone service, many inhabitants of Kuybyshev must lose a great deal of time. For this reason many complaints come from the people. Two new call stations were to be opened in 1946, one near the railroad station and the other in the region of the district agricultural home. This proposal was not realized mainly because no one gave it close attention. And it is a pity, for Kuybyshev should have had several call stations long before this to bring telephone communications closer to the population.

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In the file of complaints against long-distance stations is one by a former soldier of the Soviet Army, Aleksandr Alekseyevich Matyushin, who placed a call to his brother in Syzran. He appeared at the appointed time, waited about an hour, then began to make inquiries. He was told that his brother had not appeared to take the call. Refusing to believe this, he placed a call directly to the Syzran station, where he was told that the call had not been placed because the telephone where his brother could be reached was out of order. The situation was repeated the next day. Matyushin, with considerable justification, demanded to know why he was not informed of the out-of-order telephone immediately, instead of having to wait and waste his time. On the third day, his call again did not go through, this time because his brother had been notified, by mail, too late to arrive at the appointed hour.

Evidently this explains for the most part the large number of uncompleted calls. In one month alone, there were 547 such calls.

The Syzran personnel are by no means alone in their indifferent attitude toward the people they serve. In the Oblast Pharmaceutical Administration we were told that in many regions, such as Novosibirsk, telephone offices refuse to call the employees of local pharmacies to the telephone, even when they receive notice in advance. In such cases the employees of the Kuybyshev exchange assume an attitude of complete nonintervention. This is a strange stand for the main station of a region to take.

The heads of the long-distance telephone exchange conduct a systematic training program for employees, to increase their qualifications. Last year 27 persons were trained in the telephone operators' course; in the technicians course, 29, including 17 who were trained with no interruption to their work. Over 100 employees completed seminars. Stakhanovite schools headed by the foremost industrialists are conducted regularly. However, notwithstanding this, the quality of the work of the station had deteriorated in past years. The number of errors has increased, as well as the number of complaints, and labor discipline has weakened. This is explained chiefly by inadequate political-educational work, especially with new crews. A true love for their work and an aspiration to better serve the populace is not instilled in the employees.

In July 1946 the Kuybyshev Oblast Committee VKP (b) and the executive committee of the Oblast Soviet of Workers' Deputies passed a joint decree which read:

"For work done by personnel in fulfillment of very important assignments of the State Defense Committee, consistent fulfillment of production plans and better indexes of work during World War II, we award the Red Banner of the Oblast Committee VKP (b) and the executive committee of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies and present it for permanent custody to the Kuybyshev long-distance telephone exchange."

This shows how highly these organizations valued the unselfish work of the outstanding communications personnel during World War II. There is no doubt that these workers can do high-quality work under postwar conditions also.

The Kuybyshev long-distance telephone exchange has at its disposal all the requisites, both technical means and qualified staffs, to serve successfully not only large enterprises, but also the everyday needs of the populace. However, up to this time these possibilities have not been utilized in the fullest measure. The supervisors of the exchange, Ivanov, the manager, and Meyerson the chief engineer, should adopt effective measures to improve the service to the population of Kuybyshev.

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